



Inv. no. 32/1988

MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF FIRDAWSI'S *SHAHNAMA*.
'ISFANDIYAR'S FIFTH ORDEAL; HE MUST SLAY THE SIMURGH'

IRAN, TABRIZ; BETWEEN 1520 AND 1535

LEAF: 47.3 X 32 CM

One of the most magnificent Persian manuscripts ever produced is undoubtedly the copy of the *Book of Kings* that was made for the Safavid shahs Ismail I and Tahmasp. It contained 258 paintings, and experts believe that they can identify the work of 15 of the period's best artists, although only two of the paintings are signed. The result is a sublime synthesis of Turkmen and Timurid painting.

In order to slay the fearful Simurgh, the hero Isfandiyar makes a carriage fitted with blades. After the bird has wounded itself in repeated attacks, the Persian hero jumps out and slays his colorful opponent.

Published in:

Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch: *The Houghton Shahnameh*, Cambridge, Mass. 1981, vol. 2, pl. 203;
Christie's, London, 11/10-1988, lot 9;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Islamic art. The David Collection*, Copenhagen 1990, cat.no. 26;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Fabelvæsner fra Islams Verden*, Davids Samling, København 1991, cat.no. 55;
Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 27; 1
Jessica Hallett, Conceicao Amaral (eds.): *Cultures of the Indian Ocean*, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lissabon 1998, cat.no. 41;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 34;
Marthe Bernus Taylor [et al.]: *L'etrange et le merveilleux en terres d'Islam*, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris 2001, cat.no. 132;
Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 35;
Sheila R. Canby: *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp: the Persian Book of Kings*, New York 2011, cat.no. 223;
Sheila R. Canby: *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp : the Persian Book of Kings*, New York [2014], cat.no. 265;
Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel: *Shahnama: the Colorful Epic About Iran's Past*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2016, cat.nr. 45;
<http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:-2038354105>;
Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat.no. 47;